

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4915
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 18852

E.O. 11652: GDS, DECEMBER 31, 1981
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, SCUL
SUBJ: VENICE BIENNALE

FOR STATE CU/WE, CU/ARTS SOLMESSEN
USIA IEU AND ICS

REF: (A) SOLMSEN LE TER OF DECEMBER 5, (B) ROME 18851

1. HERewith UPDATING ON VENICE BIENNALE SITUATION. NOTE
IMMINENCE OF NEXT MEETING OF COMMISSIONERS ON JANUARY 9 ASEAHKWAAGWHI
CH CAO AND BPAO WELLS WILL ATTEND, AND URGE EARLIEST
RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS WHICH WILL BE CLEAR FROM FOLLOWING.

2. AFTER EXCHANGE OF CABLES IN JULY ON THIS SUBJECT (ROME
9767 ETC), WE MADE NO REPRESENTATIONS TO VB AUTHORITIES.
THIS CONNECTION, COPY OF MOMA LETTER TO VB UNRECEIVED
BY ARNDT AS PRONRTATE 174235. IN SEPTEMBER CONGEN FINS
VISITED VENICE AND DURING ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS RECEIVED
CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT VB MAKING SUPREME EFFORT DEPOLITICIZE
ITSELF. FINA RECOMMENDED "MEASURED RENEWED U.S.
COLLABORATION," SUBJECT TO VARIOUS KINDS OF WATCHFULNESS.

3. NEXT RIPA DE MEANO THROUGH FONMIN REQUESTED MEETING
WITH AMBASSADOR WHICH PROVED IMPOSSIBLE SO SPENT LONG
SESSION WITH PAO AND CAO. INTENTIONS CLEARLY APOLOGETIC
FOR PAST AND HOPFUL FOR BETTER FUTURE. UNFORTUNATELY
RIPA ON LEAVING USIS OFFICES LUNCHEd WITH DAILY AMERICAN
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THEATRE CRITIC JOHN FRANCIS LANE WHO PUBLISHED IRRITATING

VERSION THIS LUNCHEON IN ARTICLE NEXT DAY'S DAILY AMERICAN, REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO CONGEN'S COMPLAINTS ABOUT ANTI-AMERICAN VB ACTIVITIES IN PAST.

4. MEANWHILE VB ADMINISTRATOR MENEGAZZU SENT ON GROUP TRAVEL PROJECT IN ARTS ADMINISTRATION ON SPECIAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE BY CU/IVP, WHICH RIPA SEES AND APPRECIATES AS GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP.

5. DECEMBER 12 CAO VISITED BY VITTORIO GREGOTTI, DIRECTOR OF VISUAL ARTS SECTION, AND URGED WE MAKE KNOWN U.S. INTENTIONS REGARDING VISUAL ARTS PARTICIPATION AT MEETING OF JANUARY 9.

6. ON DECEMBER 23 PAO AND CAO MET CARLO FUSCAGNI, MEMBER DC NATIONAL COUNCIL (AND RAI STAFFER) WHO WATCHES VB AND OTHER CULTURAL AFFAIRS FOR DC. FUSCAGNI CAME ACROSS STRONGLY AS FAVORING U.S. ROLE AND INDEED FEELING THAT NEGATIVE ACTION COULD BE EXPLOITED BY PCI AND OTHERS TO GENERAL U.S. DISADVANTAGE. HE WILL SEEK OUT MORE DIRECT EXPRESSION OF DC POSITION, BUT FELT THAT DC'S GUISEEPE ROSSINI, MEMBER OF BIENNALE COUNCIL, ALSO FAVOR U.S. PARTICIPATION.

7. ON DECEMBER 22 CAO LUNCHEONED WITH CAO'S OF FRANCE, U.K. AND GERMANY. WHILE ALL EXPRESSED RELUCTANCE AND DISMAY AT THE VB COMPLEX OVER THE YEARS, IT CLEAR THAT THERE WILL BE SOME KIND OF PARTICIPATION FROM ALL THREE COUNTRIES, AS YET UNSPECIFIED.

8. ON BALANCE THEREFORE EMBASSY CONSIDERS SOME KIND OF PARTICIPATION DESIRABLE, CONSIDERING POLITICAL UNCERTAINTIES HERE AND FACT THAT ABSENCE IN U.S. BICENTENNIAL YEAR WOULD BE SEEN AS SLAP IN VB FACE, EVEN POSSIBLY GESTURE OF DENIGRATION OF ITALY. WHILE MAINTAINING CLOSE TOUCH DC OPINIONS THIS MATTER, EMBASSY NOW BELIEVES WE SHOULD URGE U.S. PARTICIPATION IN VISUAL ARTS SECTOR AND THAT WE BE INFORMED BY JANUARY 9 OF THIS FACT AND, IF POSSIBLE, OF THE BROAD OUTLINES U.S. PARTICIPATION MIGHT TAKE.

9. EMBASSY ALSO TRANSMITTING UNCLASSIFIED VERSION THIS REPORT, WITH ADDED DETAILS REGARDING CONTENTS AND CONTACTS, FOR SOLMSEN USE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH NON-USG ENTITIES. VOLPE
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